

Draft Minutes
Ward 6 NPA Meeting
October 3, 2019 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Greek Orthodox Church, 600 South Willard Street

Meeting start time 6:30pm

Steering Committee member present: Gail Rafferty, Michelle Mraz, Matt Grady, Mary Riley, Joel Fitzgerald

Public Comment

A comment was made about the Champlain Parkway – concerns about an increase in the traffic at King Street. Concerns expressed that traffic will be slowed by stoplights. Concerns were noted that predominantly low-income residents will be affected. Concerns expressed about what bike traffic will look like – safety concerns about mixing pedestrians and bike traffic.

City-wide Property Re-evaluation; John Vickery

John Vickery, City Assessor, noted that it has been 13 years since the city of Burlington conducted a re-evaluation of property values. This is a mandatory re-appraisal so that the city will be in compliance with state law, and therefore education funding will not be affected. Right now properties are appraised at approximately 75% of market value. The re-evaluation will bring properties to 100% of market value. The re-evaluation will be concluded by April 2021, and the tax bills of July 2021 will show the new property values. The tax rate will be lowered to reflect the raised property values. Trained appraisers from Tyler Technologies in Texas, who have undergone background checks, will be conducting the re-evaluation. A letter went out from the city to all residents. Residents are encouraged to check the data indicated on their letter, and call if there is incorrect data on their sheet. If there is a softening of property values in any part of the city for any reason in the next two years, the data the city is using will be able to detect that in real time. At the local level our tax rate will adjust downward, and the statewide education tax rate will also adjust downward as Burlington properties gain value.

Shelburne Road Roundabout; Mike LaCroix, Chapin Spencer, Olivia Darisse, Laura Wheelock

Mike LaCroix from the State Agency of Transportation spoke about why the Shelburne Rd. intersection at Ledge Rd, So. Willard St. and Locust St. is being redesigned in to a single-lane roundabout. Current problems identified include high speeds, and high vehicular travel rate. 19,000 cars a day travel through. This intersection has been on the state's high-crash location list for 20 years. There have been approximately 50 reported crashes per every five years. The current rotary is too small, there are two driveways that are "uncontrolled," and adjacent schools and churches. It is not safe for bikes and pedestrians either. There are also 7 miles of aging buried utilities that also need attention under the roadway. What is going to be done? A single lane roundabout. Models show this will bring about a crash reduction of 65 to 70 %, and drastically reduce the severity

of crashes. There will be pedestrian sidewalks, and bike ramps to get on to shared-use paths for any bicyclist who is not comfortable going through the roundabout. Storm-water run-off will also be improved. Construction will probably be 2 plus construction seasons. Outreach and education about the project will be in 2020. Utility infrastructure improvements will take the better part of a year just for that part. UVM will also be involved because there is an old archaeological site. Ledge rock will also slow construction. This is a 7 million dollar project, and the Federal government will be putting up the full amount. Schedule – groundbreaking spring 2021.

DPW indicated that relining of the sewer pipes may be happening in the summer of 2020, but that is not the start of the construction.

The contractor on the project will be the one to decide what detours will be created, and that will be submitted to the state, and reviewed by DPW. There will be someone who is a point of contact at DPW for traffic concerns. There will be significant ledge removal. Unclear if there will be any blasting. Once constructed, traffic will be slowed down going in to the roundabout, and cars will interact more safely, with less severe collisions. The roundabout will be entered from one lane. Question: Will traffic be backed up because of reducing the lane to a single lane entry? The simulations indicate it will not happen very frequently. The model shows that within the peak hour only 5% of that time (peak hour) there will be any back-up on Shelburne Road. Residents who live on side streets down that way indicated there is a lot of backed up traffic now. A two-lane hybrid roundabout was considered for entry. The analysis of that option did not meet the safety standard for federal safety funding. There is room left to add a lane in the future if needed. Slowing down cars at this point should slow traffic speeds in to the city overall. Question asked about life-expectancy of the storm-water improvements. Presenters did not know. The cross-walks put in will be light-activated crossings. There will be multiple short crossings – only one lane, to safe islands. There will be yield signs. The advisory speed will be 20 mph, however the ordinance now is 30 mph.

Champlain Parkway; Tony Redington, Chapin Spencer

Chapin Spencer and Norm Baldwin presented on details of the Champlain Parkway. There will be a lighted median, and landscaping. From 189 there will a new section of road from Home Ave. to Lakeside Ave. at 25 mph. There will be traffic signals which will allow all pedestrians to cross. Granite curbs. There will be on-street bike facilities. Some side streets will become cul-de-sacs. Storm-water improvements will be made along this route. There will be rail-crossings. There will be gates on all four corners for rail-crossings. There will be a shared-use path on the east side of the road. The project will have improved sidewalks, and also water and sewer line improvements. One key safety feature will be raised intersections for crosswalks at Howard, Marble and Kilburn where they intersect with Pine. At Pine and Kilburn the bike lanes will move back on to Pine St. There will be new traffic signals in the Pine and Maple St. neighborhood intended to reduce the long lines at the stop signs now. Traffic flow projections indicate reduced flow in most of the areas, increased traffic in the Maple/King neighborhood. Larger class vehicles will not be going through those neighborhoods. Two plus

construction seasons. Breaking ground? There is a viable path to construction starting in 2020. How to improve “policing” of bicycles? There is an assumption that with better designated bike lanes and more room, this should improve. The project provides a continuous bike corridor all the way along. Could there be roundabouts at King and/or Maple instead of lights? The project designers do not believe there is enough room at those intersections for roundabouts. There is now a future flex agreement with VTrans as part of the project. <http://www.champlainparkway.com/>

Tony Reddington and Steve Goodkind of Pine Street Coalition presented their concerns about the current design of the Champlain Parkway. Until October 10th, direct comments can be made about the Parkway, and residents were encouraged by Tony to make comments if they have any. There was a hearing held last Thursday to look at the environmental justice aspects of the project. According to federal law, a project must not disproportionately affect low-income neighborhoods, and the Maple/King St. neighborhood appears to be disproportionately impacted negatively. Tony believes that a mini-roundabout could be put in at Maple St., based on earlier engineering studies. He thinks roundabouts should be put in along the Champlain Parkway. Tony also believes that traffic signals along the corridor will increase speeds, and increase delays. There was a question if the DOT has recommendations about the minimum size for a roundabout, and how the intersections in question measure compared to those minimum sizes? Tony replied that a mini-roundabout will fit in to any current intersection. For the new construction, roundabouts could replace traffic lights, according to Tony. Mini-roundabouts, he believes, could fit at Maple, and that a traffic engineer indicated this to be so several years ago. Some residents questioned that assumption.

There is currently litigation about the project. It was originally intended to divert traffic from both Home/Flynn Avenue and Maple/King St. areas. In 2009 the city made a request that environmental justice be applied, and now there are more stringent Federal rules about that. Steve indicated that the current plan improves the situation for Home/Flynn neighborhoods, but definitely negatively impacts the Maple/King St. areas. The Walk Bike council did not find the project adequately safe for walkers and bikes, and has endorsed the Pine Street Coalition’s redesign. There is no safe and separate bike lane in this project. Why was the Maple/King St. path initially approved? Steve believes it was done for expediency, by the Federal Highway administration and VTrans. The route was chosen in 2009, and may not pass muster under the new environmental justice regulations. Tony indicated that climate change and safety were not part of the proposal. The current plan may or may not be what goes forward, depending on the litigation. Councilor Joan Shannon indicated that she tried to get the path changed over 10 years ago, and indicated that at the time, DPW, under the directorship of Steve Goodkind, was not open to considering changes. Councilor Shannon also expressed her view that 2006 to 2009 was the time for those changes to be advocated for and she tried. Pine Street Coalition believes the Environmental Impact Statement needs to be redone.

End time: 8:30pm

Minutes by Gail Rafferty

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